

STARK SUPPORTS BUDGET BLUEPRINT

Thursday, 02 April 2009

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Budget sets stage for health care reform, investments in education and clean energy

WASHINGTON — Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) today voiced his support for the budget resolution, H.Con.Res. 85, which passed by a vote of 233-196. Below is the text of his floor statement.

"Madam Speaker, I rise today in measured support of H.Con. Res. 85, the FY 2010 Budget Resolution.

"A budget is a moral document that should reflect our priorities as a nation and act as a blueprint for the investments our nation needs to be healthy and prosperous. By this measure, the budget resolution before us is not a perfect document. It does, however, provide for vital investments in health care, jobs, education, and the environment that will spur both short-term and long-term economic growth and make our country healthier and more humane.

"This budget unfortunately continues to provide far too much money for defense—51% of discretionary spending. The \$532.6 billion for defense includes billions for out-dated or just plain bad weapons systems and ideas, such as missile defense, space-based weapons, and the V-22 Osprey. Cutting these and other wasteful defense programs would save nearly \$69 billion. These savings could be invested in reforming our education system, ending hunger, and rebuilding our infrastructure. The Congressional Progressive Caucus alternative budget would allow for those important investments and I am proud to support it.

"While the budget before us is not perfect, it does steer us—after eight years headed the wrong way—in the right

direction. It sets the stage for long overdue comprehensive health reform, while providing latitude for us to make improvements to Medicare. Within these budget parameters, we will be able to address structural problems with physician payment policies to increase access to primary care, provide incentives for coordinated patient-centered care, manage chronic diseases, and improve quality. We will build on what works in our existing system by creating a public health insurance plan available to everyone and preserving our existing employer-based system. This budget will allow us to make investments in our people and our future, yielding long-term benefits in both tangible cost savings and improved quality of life by finally achieving quality, affordable health care for all.

"This budget provides a framework for economic prosperity and builds on the investments made by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in education and energy. Under this budget, education from early childhood through college is given top priority. It allows for the expansion of early childhood education programs and creation of a nurse visitation program that will assist new mothers raise healthy children. The bill also creates a framework to permanently reform the Pell Grant program and ensure that it provides yearly increases for students most in need of assistance.

"Creating a clean energy economy will not only allow us to avoid the catastrophic consequences of global warming, it will also create jobs and spur innovation. This budget includes a roadmap for a comprehensive response to global warming and provides for investments in energy efficiency and technology that will lead to good paying jobs across the country. Already, the energy funds in the recovery bill are creating jobs in my district through the financing of a new solar panel manufacturing facility. These types of projects will become more common with the passage of this budget.

"This budget clearly distinguishes the priorities of the new Congress and President Obama—jobs, universal health care, and a first rate education system—from the misplaced priorities of past Republican budgets—tax cuts for the wealthy, war, and an eviscerated safety net. I urge all of my colleagues to embrace priorities that put the health and wellbeing of people ahead of the narrow interests of the well connected and support this budget."

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